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 978-1-107-68244-3 - The Book of Job
 Edited with an Introduction by A. Nairne
 Excerpt
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THE BOOK OF JOB

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the children of the east. And his sons went and held a feast in the house of each one upon his day; and they sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and renounced God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

In the Presence
of Jahveh Job
is committed to
the Adversary
for trial of his
integrity

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job? for there is none like him in the earth, a

perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil. Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will renounce thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

And it fell on a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, that there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have taken them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and,

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CHAPTERS I, 19–22; II, 1–8 3

behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped; and he said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God with foolishness.

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job? for there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil: and he still holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; only spare his life. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal;

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4 CHAPTERS II, 8-13; III, 1-5

and he sat among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? renounce God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Three Friends
 come to
 comfort Job in
 his affliction

Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: and they made an appointment together to come to bemoan him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

Job, ignorant
 of the divine
 transaction,
 curses his
 birth day

After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.
 And Job answered and said:
 Let the day perish wherein I was born,
 And the night which said, There is a man child
 conceived.
 Let that day be darkness;
 Let not God regard it from above,
 Neither let the light shine upon it.
 Let darkness and the shadow of death claim it for
 their own;
 Let a cloud dwell upon it;
 Let all that maketh black the day terrify it.

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CHAPTER III, 6–19

5

As for that night, let thick darkness seize upon it:
Let it not rejoice among the days of the year;
Let it not come into the number of the months.
Lo, let that night be barren;
Let no joyful voice come therein.
Let them curse it that curse the day,
Who are ready to rouse up leviathan.
Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark:
Let it look for light, but have none;
Neither let it behold the eyelids of the morning:
Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's
womb,
Nor hid trouble from mine eyes.
Why died I not from the womb?
Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of
the belly?
Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should suck?
For now should I have lain down and been quiet;
I should have slept; then had I been at rest:
With kings and counsellors of the earth,
Which built up waste places for themselves;
Or with princes that had gold,
Who filled their houses with silver:
Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been;
As infants which never saw light.
There the wicked cease from troubling;
And there the weary be at rest.
There the prisoners are at ease together;
They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
The small and great are there;

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6 CHAPTERS III, 19–26; IV, 1–7

And the servant is free from his master.
 Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,
 And life unto the bitter in soul;
 Which long for death, but it cometh not;
 And dig for it more than for hid treasures;
 Which rejoice exceedingly,
 And are glad, when they can find the grave?
 Why is light given to a man whose way is hid,
 And whom God hath hedged in?
 For my sighing cometh before I eat,
 And my roarings are poured out like water.
 For the thing which I fear cometh upon me,
 And that which I am afraid of cometh unto me.
 I am not at ease, neither am I quiet, neither have I
 rest;
 But trouble cometh.

Eliphaz bids
 Job have
 confidence in
 God, as a good
 man may;

Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,
 If one assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be
 grieved?
 But who can withhold himself from speaking?
 Behold, thou hast instructed many,
 And thou hast strengthened the weak hands.
 Thy words have upholden him that was falling,
 And thou hast confirmed the feeble knees.
 But now it is come unto thee, and thou faintest;
 It toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.
 Is not thy fear of God thy confidence,
 And thy hope the integrity of thy ways?
 Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being
 innocent?

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CHAPTER IV, 7–21

7

Or where were the upright cut off?
 According as I have seen, they that plow iniquity,
 And sow trouble, reap the same.
 By the breath of God they perish,
 And by the blast of his anger are they consumed.
 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion,
 And the teeth of the young lions, are broken.
 The old lion perisheth for lack of prey,
 And the whelps of the lioness are scattered abroad.
 Now a thing was secretly brought to me,
 And mine ear received a whisper thereof.
 In thoughts from the visions of the night,
 When deep sleep falleth on men,
 Fear came upon me, and trembling,
 Which made all my bones to shake.
 Then a spirit passed before my face;
 The hair of my flesh stood up.
 It stood still, but I could not discern the appearance
 thereof;
 A form was before mine eyes:
 There was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,
 Shall mortal man be more just than God?
 Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?
 Behold, he putteth no trust in his servants;
 And his angels he chargeth with folly:
 How much more them that dwell in houses of clay,
 Whose foundation is in the dust,
 Which are crushed before the moth!
 Betwixt morning and evening they are destroyed:
 They perish for ever without any regarding it.
 Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them?

yet
 remembering
 the frailty of
 human virtue,

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8 CHAPTERS IV, 21; V, 1-14

They die, and that without wisdom.
 Call now; is there any that will answer thee?
 And to which of the holy ones wilt thou turn?
 For vexation killeth the foolish man,
 And jealousy slayeth the silly one.
 I have seen the foolish taking root:
 But suddenly I cursed his habitation.
 His children are far from safety,
 And they are crushed in the gate,
 Neither is there any to deliver them.
 Whose harvest the hungry eateth up,
 And taketh it even out of the thorns,
 And the snare gapeth for their substance.
 For affliction cometh not forth of the dust,
 Neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;
 But man is born unto trouble,
 As the sparks fly upward.
 But as for me, I would seek unto God,
 And unto God would I commit my cause:
 Which doeth great things and unsearchable;
 Marvellous things without number:
 Who giveth rain upon the earth,
 And sendeth waters upon the fields:
 So that he setteth up on high those that be low;
 And those which mourn are exalted to safety.
 He frustrateth the devices of the crafty,
 So that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.
 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness:
 And the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.
 They meet with darkness in the day-time,
 And grope at noonday as in the night.

would have him
 seek unto God
 more
 suppliantly

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CHAPTERS V, 15–27; VI, 1, 2

9

But he saveth from the sword of their mouth,
 Even the needy from the hand of the mighty.
 So the poor hath hope,
 And iniquity stoppeth her mouth.
 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth:
 Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the
 Almighty.

For he maketh sore, and bindeth up;
 He woundeth, and his hands make whole.
 He shall deliver thee in six troubles;
 Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.
 In famine he shall redeem thee from death;
 And in war from the power of the sword.
 Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue;
 Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it
 cometh.

At destruction and dearth thou shalt laugh;
 Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
 For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field;
 And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.
 And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace;
 And thou shalt visit thy fold, and shalt miss nothing.
 Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great,
 And thine offspring as the grass of the earth.
 Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,
 Like as a shock of corn cometh in in its season.
 Lo this, we have searched it, so it is;
 Hear it, and know thou it for thy good.

Then Job answered and said,
 Oh that my vexation were but weighed,

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From such
 cold comfort
 and unfriendly
 friendship

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10

CHAPTER VI, 2-15

And my calamity laid in the balances together!
 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the seas:
 Therefore have my words been rash.
 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me,
 The poison whereof my spirit drinketh up:
 The terrors of God do set themselves in array against
 me.

Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass?
 Or loweth the ox over his fodder?
 Can that which hath no savour be eaten without salt?
 Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?
 My soul refuseth to touch them;
 They are as loathsome meat to me.
 Oh that I might have my request;
 And that God would grant me the thing that I long
 for!

Job doth turn
 to God,

Even that it would please God to crush me;
 That he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!
 Then should I yet have comfort;
 Yea, I would exult in pain that spareth not:
 For I have not denied the words of the Holy One.
 What is my strength, that I should wait?
 And what is mine end, that I should be patient?
 Is my strength the strength of stones?
 Or is my flesh of brass?
 Is it not that I have no help in me,
 And that effectual working is driven quite from me?
 To him that is ready to faint kindness should be
 shewed from his friend;
 Even to him that forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.
 My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook,